



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia Information Technologies Agency

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VITA, Northrop Grumman complete successful disaster recovery test *– Drill involved 12 agencies, simulated loss of data center –*

RICHMOND, VA -- The Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA), Northrop Grumman and staff from 12 participating state agencies successfully have completed a comprehensive disaster recovery (DR) test restoring all critical systems in 24 hours and other less critical systems within 48 hours.

This was the first test that involved a simulated complete loss of the data center at the Commonwealth Enterprise Solutions Center (CESC).

“It is vitally important that the Commonwealth test mission-critical computer systems on a prescribed schedule” said Commonwealth Chief Information Officer Sam Nixon. “These tests determine the readiness and back-up capabilities of the IT infrastructure in the event of a disaster. Just as emergency responders plan, test and prepare for disasters, we must be equally prepared to react as circumstances demand. The state’s Executive Branch agencies -- nearly 90 of them -- depend on VITA and Northrop Grumman for continuity of services. We conduct these tests to ensure that if systems go down during a disaster, we can restore them so that agencies can continue to serve the citizens of the Commonwealth.”

The scenario involved a hurricane simulation and flooding of the CESC data center in Chester that made it inoperable. Because the test was a weather-related event, staff had the opportunity to prepare as a “pre-event” to the test.

“When the test called for a complete loss of the data center from simulated flooding, staff had to react accordingly,” said Sam Abbate, vice president, VITA Program for Northrop Grumman. Systems were restored at the Commonwealth’s back-up data center -- the Southwest Enterprise Solutions Center in Lebanon, Russell County.”

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For the first time, three systems were tested:

- The virtual private network (VPN), which allows remote access -- Agencies were able to access their systems and data from their primary location or from alternate locations. These alternate locations could include a temporary site setup if a primary location is destroyed or even employees' homes.
- The new back-up program -- A new method of backup and recovery of systems was tested.
- A new electronic notification system -- This system alerted staff members needed to respond to the test and kept others in the organization up to date on the progress of the test.

"This was a very successful test," Nixon said. "All systems at CESC were completely recovered to the back-up data center in Russell County. We restored critical systems within 24 hours and less critical systems in 48 hours, meeting our required service level requirements. The goal of the test is to discover and correct any shortcomings so they are not encountered during an actual disaster. There was one challenge with connectivity for one agency, but otherwise the test represented a significant accomplishment for the IT Infrastructure Partnership between the Commonwealth and Northrop Grumman. Those participating directly report this was the smoothest and most successful test in recent years."

There have been four previous successful tests involving 28 agencies over the last three years. This is the first simulation where the data center was lost and systems were restored at the back-up data center in Russell County. "These tests show the commitment of VITA and Northrop Grumman to service and disaster recovery for the Commonwealth," Abbate said.

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About the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA)

VITA is the Commonwealth's consolidated technology services and solutions provider responsible for the operation of the state's technology infrastructure, governance, security and oversight of major IT projects, and procurement of technology-related goods and services on behalf of state and local governments.

www.vita.virginia.gov

About Northrop Grumman

Northrop Grumman Corporation is a leading global security company whose 120,000 employees provide innovative systems, products and solutions in aerospace, electronics, information systems, shipbuilding and technical services to government and commercial customers worldwide.

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